

THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah, v. 1.*

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FATAL DELUSION.

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known." *Matt. x. 26.*

In adverting to the past history of what is called the Christian Church, we are at a loss to know the greater cause for astonishment, whether the perfidy and cruelty of men, assuming to themselves the title of ambassadors for Christ, and under pretences the most sacred, practising on mankind the vilest impositions; or the blindness and apathy of those who fell victims to their relentless cruelty.

The concurrent testimony of Church Historians establishes the fact, that the primary cause of oppression has ever existed in suffering the *Clergy* to exert an influence over *civil affairs*, or to interfere in any way with the *civil power*. Yet such have been the artful stratagems resorted to by a corrupt and worldly minded clergy, in order to obtain wealth, and thereby pave the way to their final ascendancy; and so well adapted have been these stratagems to the prejudices of the people, that before they were aware of their real tendency, they found themselves trammelled with chains which proved galling in the extreme, but which all their wisdom could not remove.

Never was there a delusion more direful in its consequences, nor yet more beguiling in its aspect, than the one which at present, in this country, seems to possess the minds of a large portion of the people, and I may add, of some of our wisest men. This delusion consists in the belief that a union of Church and State can never be effected in the United States, on the ground that there exists so many sects, each one differing in creed from the

rest, and each one zealous for its own; and that such is the construction of our civil government, that if any one sect would attempt to establish itself predominant, the numerous sects differing from it in creed could easily defeat such an attempt. I have stated that this delusion wears a beguiling aspect—and it is true. It shall now be my object, in a very brief manner, to expose its fallacy, and to shew that instead of making us, as a nation, feel more secure in the enjoyment of "*civil and religious liberty*," it should cause us to guard with a more jealous care the *invaluable rights* guaranteed in the constitution of our country to every citizen.

The argument, that a multiplicity of sects, each differing in creed from the rest, will prove a bulwark to guard against the **UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE**, holds good only on the hypothesis, that all sects are on a par in point of influence in the civil community.—If one sect be in the possession, say of "*two thirds of the colleges, theological seminaries, and other academic institutions in this country*," while all other sects are comparatively *poor* and *uninfluential*, it must first be shown that *influence* cannot supplant *merit*, and *wealth* overrule *poverty*, before the above argument will hold good. The important point then is, to ascertain whether or not all sects possess in the United States equal influence. Until it be satisfactorily proved that they do, it is a *fatal delusion* for any sect (save the aspiring one) to dream of security.

Wisely has President Jackson, in his late message, remarked, that the "*mail establishment*" is to the "*body politic, what the veins and arteries are to the natural*." And if one sect, more influ-

ential and more crafty than the rest, can but prevail on a sufficient number of others to aid it in impeding the vital and regular current of the "*body politic*," that "*body*" may soon become so enfeebled as to totter, and finally to fall at the feet of its destroyer. And then may "*civil and religious liberty*," as well as "*orthodoxy*," be construed to mean any thing that will best promote the interests of the aspiring sect.

What blindness then (to say the least) does it bespeak in the Methodist Church, and others, to be aiding (by co-operation) in the accomplishment of their own ruin. And how imperiously does it demand that the Representatives of a "*free people*" should carefully guard against the introduction of a principle into the civil compact which has proved "*a desolating scourge to the fairest portions of the world*," and which, instead of promoting the religion of Christ, has tarnished its true lustre and *strengthened the bands of infidelity*.

In a statement which appeared in the "*Philadelphian*" of the 4th Dec. 1829, (a Presbyterian paper printed in Philadelphia) Dr. Ezra Styles Ely endeavours to make appear that a minister in a city cannot comfortably support a family on less than \$2125 25 per annum, at, he states, "*a moderate estimate*."* Now supposing that in the year 1848, there will be 5000 Presbyterian ministers in the United States, (which according to a calculation made by the Presbyterians, will then be needed) and each one be satisfied to receive the amount of this "*moderate estimate*," the annual claim of Presbyterian ministers alone for support will be 10,626,250 dollars. May we now be permitted to ask, what will be competent to meet such demands, unless it be the fulfilment of the prediction, that "*in ten years, or certainly in twenty, the political power of our country would*

be in the hands of men whose characters have been formed under the influence of Sabbath Schools?" J. W.

[The writer of the foregoing article, at his own expense, has procured the printing and circulation of many hundred copies of the same during the last month. If more persons were similarly disposed, and would be at some small expense in circulating useful and important information in relation to the schemes of the Clergy, and the dangers which threaten us, the encroachments attempted upon our liberties might be checked, and we be saved from that clerical influence which has entwined itself with, and finally controlled every other Christian country in existence, except our own.—*Ed. Ref.*]

[From the *Maine Christian Intelligencer*.]

"OBSTA PRINCIPIIS."

It was a maxim of the ancients, "Resist beginnings, if you would secure a salutary end." The whole history of the world will show, that the first measures towards the overthrow of the liberties of a people, were always dressed in the robes of innocence and made to appear friendly to the cause of freedom. Then are first steps regarded as innocent or unimportant at the time, which, when they are taken, lead with great certainty at every advance, to destruction. The first steps towards a national religion, and consequently towards an overthrow of our civil liberties in the United States, are now being taken by the orthodox, by a simultaneous movement from one end of the nation to the other. The first step is, to establish the principle that Congress, (as in the case of petitioning for the stoppage of Sunday mails) have a right to legislate on subjects relating to religion. That they are compelled to be less devotional and righteous on account of the mails being conveyed on the great routes on Sunday, or that they feel themselves to be deprived of any civil rights by the existing law, no one believes. If in one case out of a thousand the mail *does* pass by a meeting-house in service time on the Sabbath, it no more distracts the devotions of the sanctua-

* See the *Philadelphian* of the above date.

ry, than if one of the rich worshippers were coming to church in his coach and six, with his negro servant to stand by his horses while his master goes in to humble himself before God. The simple stopping of the mails *is not the object*. A fig do they care about this. No. Let them accomplish what they are after, and they would not care if the mails passed their church doors every hour in the day. That the mails, in some few cases, travel on Sunday, is the *occasion*, not the *cause* of their present operations. They have ulterior and more important objects in view than the mere stopping of these mails. Let them get Congress to yield to them in one point, and their demands would increase with every new case of subserviency on the part of Congress. Let them succeed in inducing Congress to decide that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath, and to say that no one shall do any thing on that day which is not in accordance with the views of the orthodox on the subject, and the next thing we should hear, would be, that Congress must decide that their church is the only true christian church; that the welfare and preservation of our institutions depended upon the propagation and acknowledgement of their doctrines; and that every citizen who refuses to submit to this decision shall, and of right ought to be, excluded from power, and punished as an enemy to the peace and welfare of the state.—The truth is, as the Senate saw last winter, their *grand* object is to get the destinies of the Republic in their own hands, with a view to enforce their religion by fines and penalties; and the efforts to stop the mails is the first step, the “entering wedge,” which, unless it is promptly and spiritedly resisted at the outset, will have a direct tendency to hasten the dissolution of our free institutions.

Fellow citizens—all who love republican liberty—it is high time—we repeat it, it is high time your eyes were open to the crafty and deeply laid plans

which are in existence with a class of people who profess to be the most religious, and who therefore *claim* to have the greater power and control, to rob you of your equal rights and freedom. Let such men be watched; let them be rebuked by you in every case where they propose to use you as tools for the accomplishment of their anti-republican purposes. We know indeed, that a few editors of common newspapers—but a few—disbelieve that the orthodox are planning an union of church and state. The Portland Gazette is among this number. Its editor does indeed believe, that it is improper on the part of the orthodox, to urge the subject of the mails before Congress, as by so doing they will injure their own cause; still he doubts whether any one is so preposterous as to think seriously of uniting church and state. We can hardly think the editor of that paper has examined this subject attentively. If he had, we dare say he would not be found singing this syren song of “no danger.”

Petitions for stopping the mails are printed in thousands and tens of thousands. In every county in this state, and no doubt in every county in the United States, some one orthodox minister is furnished with a supply of copies, with instructions to send one or more into every town in his county, to the charge of a preacher or active layman of that party. These are now, even this moment, industriously employed in carrying the petition to every person it will answer to approach on the subject, men and boys, and in some cases children, *requiring* them to put their names to the memorial. In this way a terrible array of names will no doubt be obtained, the mere number of which will astonish Congress and the nation. In some cases, probably names will be forged, or the names of persons not in existence will be added to the list, as was done in several instances last winter, to make it appear that a very great proportion of the people are favorable to their de-

signs. We saw one of the petitions a few days since. As we remarked in our last, it goes upon the ground that the present law is an infringement on religious liberty! It urges as the motive of the petitioners, the *glory of God and the good of souls.* This, if the Spanish Inquisitors ever condescended so much as to explain, is their plea for torturing heretics for their unbelief. Church and state were united in every nation of Europe "for the glory of God and the good of souls." Thousands, yea, millions of innocent persons have suffered torture and death "for the glory of God and the good of souls." We hope our fellow citizens will be on their guard and not lend their names inconsiderately to these petitions. Depend upon it, "there is death in the pot."

The writer of the following communication has been a member of the legislature in one of the New England states, and is well acquainted with the schemes and plans of the clergy.

For the Reformer.

The situation of our country has assumed an alarming aspect. The liberties which our fathers acquired with so much devotedness, for their posterity, are about to be attacked by an aspiring clergy. The means they are using are so subtle in their nature, that a great part of those, whom they dupe to give their money, cannot be made to believe they have a hidden design to use the money they give to deprive them of the liberty of conscience, or destroy the established liberties of their country. A distinguished member of a Presbyterian church, lately observed, that *all the societies now established*, (including the temperate society) *were plans of the Presbyterians*, and shortly they would be the *richest society ever formed*; and I verily believe he spake the truth. The vast sums they are annually collecting, compared with their annual expenditures, will give them more than half a million a year, besides the interest on

vested money. This is accumulating in the hands of the clergy, to be managed or expended in such a manner as they may think proper.

I am informed that one of these societies has received already more than 1,000,000 of dollars, a large portion of which is funded or secured by bond and mortgage on real estate. Another of these societies had more than 60,000 dollars added to its permanent funds in one year.* We are irresistably compelled to believe the clergy have an object in view, by amassing this enormous wealth. When we look into the history of the papal church, and there see what use they made of their immense wealth, we may easily learn how such wealth will be used by an aspiring clergy. Human nature is the same now as it was then. The same alluring temptation which led the ancient clergy, will allure now.—Nor are we left in the dark to read their object. Dr. Ely has given a synopsis of their plan. We may observe, they already feel their strength, both in numbers and resources, to commence their work. They have made the carrying the Mail on the First day of the week, a rallying point in effecting their object.

In all their general meetings which have come to our knowledge, they have resolved not only again to petition Congress, but to over-awe them into their measures. In some meetings they have declared, "WE WILL LET CONGRESS KNOW WE ARE THEIR MASTERS." Here is no disguise.—They speak in a tone of decision.—They will raise the standard of rebellion, if they cannot accomplish their object without. In 1814, when a convention was called at Hartford, to consider the propriety of raising the standard against the government, they had not resources at their command to countenance them in the act; but the clergy have already removed this embarrassment. They have millions on

* See Reformer of Oct. last, page 151.

which they can rely. Jefferson recommended the expenditure of the public money on objects of public utility, under an apprehension that abundant resources would tempt Congress unnecessarily to declare war, at some future period. How much more ought we to fear the accumulation of millions by a certain class of men, who have hitherto, in all other governments, been the overthrow of civil liberty.

It becomes a weighty consideration, whether our government ought to suffer any body of men to accumulate such an immense treasure, especially when they are not incorporated by any public authority, nor accountable for their conduct, or the use made of their treasure, to any civil jurisdiction whatever. Civil liberty does not consist in suffering any self-created body of men to acquire those means, by which they can at pleasure subvert the government. It appears to me, the crisis demands that the spirit of patriotism should arouse, and apply to Congress to avert the threatened vengeance of the clergy while it is in their power, by declaring that all lands or securities, given to unincorporate bodies, should be forfeited to the government, together with all available property. Unless this, or some similar measure be adopted by government to restrain the clergy, their wealth within a few years, will be immense, and their ambitious views uncontrollable. The sooner the government interposes, the more easily will this monster of frightful mein to our liberties, be subdued. It is idle to rely on the patriotism of the clergy, when they have power to aggrandize themselves on the ruins of our liberties. The history of the human race does not afford a solitary instance. We may read the future conduct of the wealthy clergy in the history of the Romish church. The wealth of that ancient order enabled them to trample on the civil rights of the people, and has ever since been exerted to crush every attempt to guarantee the least appear-

ance of equal rights in the people.— Within the annals of the present generation, we have seen the Spanish clergy approaching the throne, when the financial concerns of the kingdom were exhausted, and offering their treasures if the king would guarantee to them the suppression of civil liberty, and an enlargement of clerical privileges. A similar spirit is manifested in our country. We hear the clergy publicly resolving to over-awe Congress, and if they will not succumb, they will make themselves the *Masters* of the government.

Can it be, that the people can hear such resolves with indifference; that the revolutionary spirit of freedom has become a stranger in the breasts of the descendants of the sons of liberty. A redeeming spirit must animate their breasts and arouse them to the noble resolve, to act worthy the deeds of their fathers, and thus show they are not unmindful of the duties they owe to the memory of those who obtained the invaluable inheritance of civil liberty for them. It is time for the people sentimentally to act, and indignantly to frown on such attempts. It is time for Congress to act, and meet this deadly foe to our liberties, with an efficient antidote.

CYRIL.

To the Editor of the Reformer.

On viewing the proceedings of a party in our country, who appear industriously engaged in devising ways and means to unite church and state, and thereby bring the people of these United States under the worst kind of bondage—I have been led to query, Why no efforts are making to counteract those proceedings? Are not our representatives in Congress the guardians of our liberties and our free constitution? Why then do we not call on them by petitions, to arrest the progress of priestcraft, by passing a law making all these combinations of a religious character, under the title of national societies, treason, and confiscating their property to the government

or to the general good of society—also, declaring all laws passed by state legislators, or by city or borough corporations, favoring any sectarian views as to the observance of days, &c. to be unconstitutional and null and void. Likewise, that all petitioners to Congress or to any of the state councils, for the passage of any law favouring any particular sectarian views, or on any religious subject whatever, should be deemed conspirators, and be treated as such—and also, that all missionary beggars, or those under the title of the preachers of the gospel, who should solicit donations or contributions of any kind, for aiding the great and popular religious schemes of the day, should be considered in the same light. I wish all the true friends of liberty to be aroused to their true interest before it is too late. The alarm has been sounded long and loud, and as yet I have not seen any antidote offered, that had the appearance of being sufficient to stop the progress of priestcraft and the evils attendant thereon. If this should appear worthy of a place in the Reformer, please insert it with a request to all printers in the United States, friendly to liberty, to do the same, and oblige a friend of Lycoming county, Pa.

S. C.

Remarks on the two preceding communications.

We have given the two preceding communications entire, that our readers may have an opportunity of knowing the honest opinions entertained by respectable individuals, in reference to the dangers which threaten us, and the *means to be used* in order to counteract them. The interference of Congress, however, in the way proposed, we should deem improper. It would be well if Congress would only refuse any and every enactment in favour of the plans and proceedings of the clergy, and rescind every law now in existence, tending in the most remote degree, to promote the claims and assumptions of an arrogant and

ambitious priesthood. Let Congress confine its acts wholly to matters of a civil nature, and never undertake to legislate respecting those which appertain to religion. Christ has said that *his kingdom is not of this world*, and every attempt to promote its interests by legislative enactments, or to aid it in any way by means of money, human associations, or worldly authority, has only tended to degrade and destroy it. How reprehensible and anti-christian then, are the efforts which the priesthood in this country are now making to induce Congress to pass a law favouring their particular views of religious duty. It would be quite as consistent and proper for Congress to make laws expressly against the present plans and designs of the clergy, and confiscate their funds, lest they should be used for the overthrow of the government, as it would be to make laws in favour of any of their schemes. Indeed, it would be much more consistent and proper, since every civil government is bound to endeavour to support itself and to secure its perpetuity and efficiency.

A *remedy*, and an *effectual remedy*, it is certain, is very much needed to arrest the rapid and threatening strides which priestcraft is now making in this country; but that remedy rests solely in the hands of the great body of the American people. It is with them to determine whether we shall much longer enjoy our present civil and religious privileges, or be deprived of them and become the slaves and vassals of a corrupt priesthood, as in most of the countries of Europe. It is just as easy for the people of this country to put an effectual check to the growing power of priestcraft, and relieve the country at once from all danger from that quarter, as to change the position of one of their hands. Does any one ask how this is to be done? We answer—It is plainly and simply, only to withhold every cent from the grasp of modern hireling priests, and to withdraw from every association and scheme now in

operation for promoting their influence and ascendancy. In short, the *only effectual remedy* that can be applied in the case, is not to give one cent for the hire of any priest, and to have no connexion with, or contribute a single item to, any Bible, Missionary, Tract, or other societies which have been got up in these modern days for raising money, under pretence of promoting christianity. The Lord needs no one's money, or the formation of any societies to promote his cause, and every cent given for such a purpose, only tends to build up the cause of priesthood in our land, and jeopardize the civil and religious liberties of the country. To give money, therefore, to a corrupt priesthood, or to be associated with any of the clerical schemes or societies of the day, is to aid in corrupting and debasing the religion of the New Testament, and assisting to destroy the civil and religious privileges which we now enjoy.

In making these remarks, we feel that we are honestly discharging our duty to society, and each individual must for himself decide whether he will apply the remedy needed, so far as relates to himself, or neglect the proper opportunity to save both christianity and our civil liberties from degradation and ruin.

MISSIONS AMONG THE INDIANS.

The following extract of a letter, written by a highly respectable individual, living in the neighbourhood of the Choctaw missionary establishments, and who is well acquainted with their proceedings, deserves the candid consideration of those who have so freely lavished their money in support of the modern plans for converting the heathen. The name of the person who wrote the letter, and whose name is given at the close of the extract, is sufficient to stamp the seal of accuracy upon what is written; and if there were more who possessed the same fearless independence in presenting facts before the public, people would not much longer be in the dark respecting modern missionary undertakings, and the estimation in which the missionaries are held by those living near the scene of their operations.

The letter is dated *Hill of Hope*, Mississippi, Dec. 21, 1829, and without further introduction we present the extract to our readers.

If I was in a situation to write, I am in possession of considerable matter relative to the missionaries in this quarter of the world, which would be interesting to the people at a distance, who are unacquainted with their manner of operation at their establishments.

I suppose that the charitable ladies in the northern and eastern states, would not be so liberal in sending their donations to the missionaries if they knew that there were thousands of ready made clothes, woollen socks, &c. &c. rat-eaten and rotting in their garrets, and other *out-of-the-way* places. Whether they would continue their liberality or not, I can assure them that it is the case with the principal part of the domestic donations, sent to the Choctaw missionaries.— Yes, generous females, your labour is converted into rats' nests, while the "*poor little Indians*" are as naked as ever they were. They have, indeed, saved some of the best of the articles donated to them, by selling to the Indians, who were able to pay for them, (there are, indeed, very few of the Indians who will trade with them) and by placing them in the stores of the white people in the adjoining counties. It is a fact, that they offer to sell woollen socks cheaper than the women of our country can afford to spin the stuff of which they are composed.

I was in company the other day, with a half-breed of information and respectability, (he, however, was not educated by the missionaries) who remarked that some of the Choctaws were getting in the habit of wearing pantaloons. I asked him if the missionaries gave the pantaloons to them? His reply was no—they would see them naked first, and then not do it. He said the Indians bought the goods from the white people in the counties near them.

If the good people of the northern states did but know how little the missionaries are thought of by the people who live nearly all around them, and what just reasons they have for thinking so lightly of them, it is likely they would not be so busily employed in establishing so many little charitable societies, and raking and scraping every thing that can possibly be spared to send on here for missionary comfort.

I will relate a circumstance which took place in this county last summer, which will serve to show how little the missionaries are respected by those who live near enough to them to be acquainted with their every day conduct at their establishments.

One of the candidates to represent this county (Monroe, Mi.) in the state legislature, was the son of a missionary, a circumstance but little known to the people, although he has resided in the county for the last five or six years. It is due to the candidate to state, that, he is a man of unimpeachable character, that he has in every respect acted the consistent gentleman, and that blame cannot be attached to him as an individual; with all his acquaintance he is an agreeable and acceptable companion. In this character he stood before the people as a candidate to represent them in their next legislature, and indeed he was a very popular one. But somehow or other it was reported that he was a friend to the missionary interest, and simultaneously the whole county was against him. It is believed by men who are acquainted, and conversed with nearly all the voters in the county, that if the report had remained uncontradicted, he would not have received twenty votes. But the report was too slanderous. To have it said that he was a friend to the proceedings of the missionaries, was more than he could stand. He immediately rode around the county, where by his own open assertions, and the assistance of his friends, he succeeded in convincing the people that though he was a friend to the spread of the

gospel, yet he was pointedly and positively opposed to the plans pursued by the missionaries for that purpose. The people being now satisfied of his honest and republican principles, elected him ahead of all the other candidates, though there are three representatives allowed the county.

I mention this last circumstance to show that our citizens are not led astray by blind prejudice, or what is generally called the rage at an election. No, they are sober, reflecting republicans, and are willing to award to merit whatever is its due. They are acquainted with the missionaries; they know their object is repugnant to a republican form of government; they are therefore unfriendly to them. A man renders himself unpopular amongst the citizens of this county, if he speaks in favour of the missionaries. Yet, the man who proves himself to be a true republican, if he has the other necessary qualifications, will meet with their support if he asks it, let him be whose son he may.

The Indians too, are getting very tired of the missionaries; almost every full Indian I see has something to say against them. - I was in conversation with one some time ago, who was very much out with them. He said the missionary religion was a very bad one, that it made the people go distracted; that already there was a man and a woman, who were insane in consequence of their belief in the missionary religion. The woman is a daughter of old William Jones, an Indian countryman. Having lost all her relations, she was quite desolate. In this situation she calmly waited for death, which, according to her religion, would take her again to her relations, where she should enjoy their society in a better world. Unfortunately for her at this time she saw the missionaries, and believed in them. They informed her that she never would see her relations again; for all who had died before the missionaries came into the country, had gone to the yellow powder lake,

(the name the Indians have for what is called hell) and now, as she had become a christian, of course the separation was final. At this news she became immediately deranged, and as she has ever since refused to attend the calls of nature, it is supposed she will soon see whether there is any truth in the assertion of the missionaries.

The following is a certificate from the United States' Interpreter to the Choctaw nation.

I certify that the woman who was deranged at camp-meeting the other day, at Fulla-hoo-mah's, is known by the name of Molly. The missionaries preached to the Indians, that all the people who had died previous to the arrival of the missionares amongst them, had gone to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. When the poor woman began to reflect on the dreadful condition of all her relations, it distressed her so much that she is quite deranged, has remained so ever since, and it is thought she will never recover.

Signed. JOHN PITCHLYNN, SENR.

If there is any thing in the above which you may think worth publishing, you are at liberty to do so. I have no fictitious name.

Yours most respectfully,
GIDEON LINCECUM.

Continuation of Extracts from "Dr." Ely's Letters to Mr. McLinn, respecting the Reformer.

"The Reformer, Vol. 1. No. 2, published in 1820, after giving some account of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, says,

'If these sums of money were only collected from the people, in order to be buried in the earth, it would not be a matter of so much consequence; but when they are collected with a view to break through every part of Christ's example, by educating men to be ministers, and preparing them to go forth to preach the gospel, with the excellency of speech and wisdom, and with all that pride and exaltation of mind, which generally distinguish those who are educated at these seminaries, we cannot but regret the delusion of those who solicit, and those who make contributions for such purposes.'

'It is very true, they undertake to as-

sert the necessity of having men classically learned, in order to be qualified to preach the gospel. But upon what authority do they make this assertion? Certainly not upon the authority of Jesus Christ, or any of his apostles: for Christ chose men unlearned to preach his word.

'Therefore these great and expensive undertakings now going forward, in order to qualify men to preach the gospel, to say the least of them, are wholly useless and unnecessary; and all the money appropriated to them is but thrown away, since nothing more is wanting to qualify and prepare any one to preach the gospel, than to be *called* and to be *taught of God*.

'To come to matter of fact in support of what is here stated, let me ask; were any men ever more truly ministers of the New Testament, better qualified to teach or more successful in bringing men to God, than the apostles and first promulgators of the gospel? yet, excepting one only, all were unlearned and unlettered men.

'To speak plainly;—with all the human attainments and literature of college-bred ministers, in general they only do harm instead of good, and like the learned scribes and expounders of the law in Christ's time, they take away the key of knowledge; neither entering into the true way of the gospel themselves, nor suffering those who would go in to enter.'

"With such matter this Reformer abounds. It is all in vain to tell him, that the apostles were three years in the peripatetic seminary of Christ, learning of him how to preach, and pray, and visit the sick, and meet with such *charitable* opponents as now assail a learned ministry, before he sent them from him to evangelize the world. Because the apostles were originally unlearned and unlettered, BEFORE they were taught by Christ, and miraculously endowed with the Holy Spirit, he would have men believe that they were **STILL** unlearned and unlettered, when they could fluently speak as many languages as they found people of different nations to address.

"Our theological course does not exceed three years, and when our ministers are considered to be well qualified, they cannot speak half so many

languages as teachers whom Christ commissioned.

"Let the gift of tongues and of supernatural wisdom, with true piety, be granted in our days to any person, and the Presbyterians will cheerfully ordain him to the work of the gospel ministry. That which any one knows by supernatural revelation he need not acquire by laborious study; but until a man somehow or other actually possesses knowledge, so as to be able to teach his fellow men, we cannot admit that he is *called* of God to be a *teacher*. He may be so far *taught of God* as to experience the love of God, and still be a novice, a babe in Christ; who instead of being a nursing father in the church, has need that others should administer to him the sincere *milk* of the word, *that he may grow thereby*.

"A person labouring under bodily disease will not judge *ignorance* to be a recommendation in a *physician*; in the mechanic arts the most *unskilful* workmen are not preferred; in a court of justice clients do not seek out, intentionally, those advocates who are least acquainted with the professional business of a lawyer; and why should an illiterate clergyman be thought a better guide to heaven, than one who unites with ardent piety an extensive knowledge of the learned languages, of biblical history and criticism, of mental science, philosophy, and theology? We have heard of a preacher, scarcely able to read the English translation of Isa. 1. 8, who of a *lodge* in a garden of cucumbers, made out a *log*, which rolling about did terrible execution upon the vines: and of another who, out of a *hind's* foot, made a *hen's* foot, and dwelt upon the philosophical structure of the same: but we have yet to learn that instead of a *wise* master builder, we ought to seek out an *ignorant* apprentice to superintend the structure of the temple of the Lord."

Remarks by the Editor of the Reformer.

To the above reasoning, if such it can be called, we deem it necessary to make

only a brief reply. We are friends to all useful learning, but who that has any true knowledge of christianity, or that is acquainted with its principles, would ever suppose that a minister of Christ might be qualified to preach the gospel in the same way as a physician is qualified to practice medicine, a mechanic to work at his trade, or a lawyer to plead, so as to be able to defend either a good or a bad cause, according to the amount of fees that should be offered to him. It is such "qualified" preachers as these that have brought christianity into the corrupt and fallen condition in which we now find it; and it will never be improved or become any better while under their care and management. An apostle has asserted that *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, and that *he hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence*.

Who could have believed in the days of primitive christianity, that the pretended disciples of Christ would ever establish theological seminaries to instruct and qualify young men to preach the gospel?—What similarity is there between the teaching of Christ and the teaching in theological seminaries? It is useless to reason with those who have set themselves in direct opposition to the example of Christ and the Apostles, and yet still pretend that they are acting in accordance with the principles and precepts of the gospel. As an evidence, however, of the little benefit likely to be derived to the cause of christianity by means of theological seminaries, and such qualified teachers as emanate from them, we will here give some extracts from a letter addressed to the Secretary of the American Education Society, by Mr. Alexander, one of the most distinguished professors in the theological seminary at Princeton, N. J. The letter was written in reply to the following inquiry, made to Mr. Alexander, by the Secretary, aforesaid, viz.

"*What, in your judgement, are the principal hindrances to the cultivation of an eminent piety in young men preparing for the ministry; and how may they be most effectually overcome?*"

After speaking of various hindrances to piety in persons preparing for the ministry, and of deficiencies in those who enter upon such a calling, Mr. Alexander proceeds:—

"But truth requires that I should state a fact, far more deplorable and

fatal, than the one mentioned above. It is, that many persons enter this holy office, who are entirely destitute of piety. What the hindrances in the way of such are, to the cultivation of eminent piety, it is needless to state. But perhaps some will be ready to think it uncharitable to suppose that this is a fact; and altogether improper to mention it in this public manner. I know, indeed, that there is a sensitiveness in many ministers on this subject; and while they admit and teach that there are many hypocrites in the communion of the Church, they are not fond of hearing that the same is the fact in regard to the ministry; and to throw out such suggestions, they fear, will only lead the people to be suspicious and censorious. But if what has been stated be really a fact, it ought to be known, and very frequently brought forward to the view of ministers; for it seems to me, that of all men, they are, in some respects, in a worse condition for improvement in personal piety, than any other persons. They are left, as it were, to themselves, and no one has it as his duty to superintend their spiritual progress. If they are deceived, they commonly hug the delusion, until death breaks the fatal enchantment. As they are but seldom warned from the pulpit, they ought to be faithfully dealt with from the press. I do not wish it to be supposed, however, that I desire to become the censor of my brethren. I am truly very unfit for such an office, and would greatly prefer being a disciple, to being a teacher.

"But to return to the case of young men preparing for the ministry. If my observation has not deceived me, there are several classes of persons who seek the ministry, without possessing genuine piety.

"There are a few—and I hope but a few—who prepare for this office, precisely with the same views and feelings with which they would prepare to be lawyers or physicians. They think that the office is useful and honorable,

and affords a decent competency, with more leisure for literary pursuits, and more seclusion from the noise and bustle of the world, than most other professions; or actuated by ambition to appear as orators before the public, they imagine that the pulpit is a fine theatre to make a display of talent and eloquence. Such men never think of the conversion of souls, or the care of souls. They may, however, please themselves with the thought, that they will be able greatly to improve the moral character of the people, and communicate much religious instruction, which will be profitable to all classes.

"The next description of those who are found entering the sacred office without piety, are such as have received what is called a religious education; who have been instructed in the doctrines of the Bible, and have been restrained from vice, and accustomed to the performance of all external duties. Young men of this class are commonly strictly conscientious, and often more rigidly exact in attendance on outward services, than many of the pious themselves. But they have never experienced a renovation of heart. They seem to suppose, that regeneration takes place without any remarkable or very perceptible change in the views and feelings of those who have been brought up with care in the Church. Such, at any rate, are the practical opinions of many who are correct in the theory of regeneration.

"There is still another class, it is to be feared, who seek the office of the ministry, without any real piety. They are persons who profess conversion, and often speak of their change as remarkable. They are confident of their own good estate, and usually are disposed to be severe judges in regard to the character of other professors. It is not uncommon for such persons to pretend to possess great skill in revivals, and to think they know precisely how to treat those who are awakened; also, in what language careless sinners must be addressed, and despise every

thing which does not accord with their own methods. I would not insinuate that all young men who fall into mistakes about the proper method of conducting revivals, are destitute of true piety; but, that some persons of fiery zeal and high pretensions, are deceived as to their own religion, is too evident to need proof. They are filled with spiritual pride, and are ready on all occasions to boast of their attainments and success in doing good.—They are always wise in their own conceit, and therefore unwilling to take advice. Indeed, unless you yield to them in every thing, they will set you down not only as an enemy to themselves, but to the cause of God. In time past, Satan opposed revivals by stirring up formalists and worldly professors to revile them; but now he seems to have changed his ground, and to aim at accomplishing the same end, by sending in to the work, men who, by their pride and imprudence, will be sure to bring a blot upon the whole cause.

"Perhaps in the selection of young men to be educated for the ministry, too much regard is paid to forward zeal, and too little to modesty and humility.

"There is, in my opinion, much error in the common mode of treating persons under their first serious impressions of religion. They are too much in public, too much in society with each other, too much under the direction and influence of weak, hot-headed men, who push themselves forward when there is any excitement, from a belief that they can be of great service. In seasons of religious excitement, lest they should pass away without effect, there is commonly a sudden increase of external means, an unprofitable frequency of meetings, and all hands set to work to bring home the concerns of eternity to the consciences and feelings of the people. By such means an excited state of feeling is produced in the public mind, during which, it is exceedingly difficult to dis-

tinguish between those who are merely affected with sympathy, and those who are really awakened by the Spirit of God. But all these come to anxious meetings, or occupy the seats appropriated to anxious inquirers. There is reason to fear, that often, when a large number are spoken of as awakened, a majority of them are under no special operation of the Spirit, but experience the common feelings of natural conscience combined with lively sympathy. But all these, when once numbered among the subjects of a revival, feel themselves bound to go forward, and do commonly enter into the full communion of the church. Hence, the sad declension and coldness observable after revivals.

"There is one thing which demands the attention of all who may be concerned in conducting revivals; it is the practice of bringing those seriously impressed, or recently converted, so much into public notice. Persons always accustomed to go along in obscurity, are now exhibited to view, as the subjects of something remarkable. The feelings of pride are so natural to every human heart, that they will rise whenever an occasion is offered.—Young people thus noticed, feel a self-complacency which is very repugnant to deep conviction of sin. There is an importunate desire in awakened persons, to be much in social meetings, and too little time is left for serious reflection alone. It is well known, that in the vegetable world, if you would promote the germination of a seed, you must cover it up and let it alone; the husbandman who should be forever raking up his seeds after they were sown, to see whether the work of vegetation was going on well, would not be likely to have vigorous and fruitful plants. The conclusion which I draw from these remarks, is, that the spiritual health and vigour of many are injured by too great officiousness in those who attend on them as guides; and by injudicious treatment the child of grace grows up like a sickly plant; or like a

human being who has suffered by injudicious nursing, or unwholesome food and air. Now, as most of our candidates for the ministry come out of revivals of religion, it is of the utmost importance, that great care be taken that the Word of God be not marred by the interference of man, in its first commencement.

"Serious young men are too soon put upon the performance of religious duties in public, and are often injudiciously pressed to turn their attention to the ministry, before a fair opportunity has been given to themselves, or to others, to form a correct judgment of their religious character. I have known several instances of young men apparently destroyed in consequence of possessing a remarkable gift of prayer. They soon found out that their prayers were admired and praised, and their foolish hearts were puffed up with vanity. The greatest caution is necessary to guard against imposition, when youth, in an obscure condition, offer themselves as candidates for the ministry. The prospect of rising from a low mechanic trade, to learning, eloquence, and respectability, is as powerful a bait as can easily be presented to the youthful mind. Ambition may give the first impulse, but it will lead the person to assume the character which it is judged will best answer its purpose. And when a young man is once taken up to be educated, you cannot easily dismiss him, unless he is guilty of some great delinquency. You have taken him from the business to which he was brought up, and changed all his prospects, and it would be cruel to drop him without some urgent cause. The course of preparatory studies is begun too soon after conversion, by many young men. They should be left for months, if not for years, to prove their sincerity, and to evince that their piety is lively and progressive. During this period, they should study their own hearts, and read those books which most faithfully describe the work of grace in the

heart, and furnish the most decisive marks for discriminating between true and false religion.

"The hindrance from associates destitute of the spirit of piety, is often sensibly felt; and with some of our candidates for the ministry, I know that there is so great a conformity to the manners and spirit of the careless part of the community, that the nicest observer can discern no difference between the professor of religion and the youth of decent morals; except when the communion table is spread, the one is found among the people of God, while the other stands aloof. There is, in my opinion, much need to look after your young men who are preparing for the ministry, while within the walls of a college. If a faithful representation were given of many, during this part of their preparatory course, those on whom they depend for aid, would not be likely to patronize them any longer. As a remedy, some propose, that pious youth should be educated in seminaries by themselves, but unless you intend to seclude them from intercourse with the world altogether—which would require them to go out of it—you must accustom them to withstand the temptation arising from the spirit and company of men of the world. And if your candidate cannot resist the current, when in the small society of a literary institution, what reason is there to hope that he will faithfully withstand the torrent, which bears almost every thing before it, in the society of the world? The way for men to attain to eminence, is not to remain ignorant of all temptation; but it is to meet and overcome it. If there were due vigilance and fidelity on the part of those who superintend their concerns, many who are in a course of education for the ministry, would never be permitted to proceed further than their college commencement.

"I have already noticed the fact, that too much social intercourse is unfavourable to piety; and one of the greatest hindrances to the cultivation of an

elevated piety, in Theological Seminaries, is, that the young men are too much in each others company; that they are too little alone, and have too little provision made for retirement, and the performance of the duties of the closet.

"In my judgment, the students continue in our seminaries for too great a portion of the year. It would be better to adopt the European arrangement of extending vacations through the summer months. During this period the students instead of posting from city to city, and from one anniversary meeting to another, ought to bury themselves in the recesses of the country, where they might enjoy health, be surrounded with agreeable scenery, and be much in solitude and reflection. Many of our young candidates have never had a proper season for deep and continued religious meditation, since they made a profession of religion: and what is rather an unfavourable symptom, there are among them, those who cannot bear such a state of seclusion. They have been accustomed to live in society so long that they enjoy themselves nowhere else. Now, I venture to assert, that although these young men may be zealous, noisy, and active professors, and may take the lead in revivals, and in all benevolent enterprises, they will be found, on careful examination, to be shallow christians."

We hope that the foregoing candid and honest remarks, coming as they do from such a source—from one employed in training up young men for the ministry, will not be without their use in opening the eyes of many who have heretofore been in great blindness with respect to the nature and character of men made ministers.

More on the subject of "Dr." Ely's letters in our next.

MEETING AT TAMMANY HALL, NEW YORK.

[At a general meeting of the citizens of New York, held at Tammany Hall, January 1829, a committee was appointed, to express their sentiments respecting the attempts then made to obtain the passage of a law for stopping the transportation of the Mails and closing the Post Offices on

Sunday. This committee again met Dec. 9, 1829, to consider what further measures ought to be adopted, when a *second* and more determined effort was making to induce Congress to impose those Sunday restrictions. At this meeting, an able and lengthy Address was delivered, some extracts from which were given in our last number, and a few other extracts are here subjoined.]

Again, it is a matter worthy of your serious inquiry to ascertain by what *authority*, or under what *pretence*, our legislature make appropriations of money from the Public Treasury to *pay the hire of the clergy to pray for them*. The observance of this custom for a time, after the adoption of a Constitution of civil government repugnant to it, both in its spirit and express provisions, is no sufficient reason for its continuance, or proof of its harmless influence on the religious liberties of the people. So intimate an association of official legislative duties with religious forms and ceremonies, is a practical approximation to a *union* of Church and State. The facility it affords for the exercise of ecclesiastical influence over the legislative department of the government, will account for the disposition so often exhibited by our legislators to interfere with the rights of conscience, and who, with a view to be religious, or from a fear to appear otherwise, have, in various instances, actually entrenched on the religious liberty of their constituents.—The practice alluded to, points to the influence which induced a governor of this State, a few years since, officially to propose to the legislature that provision for the Clergy "be assessed on the members of their respective corporations, in proportion to their taxable estates, as rated in the legal assessments, and to have the same levied and (after the usual deduction for charges) paid to them (the clergy) by the public collector"!!! and it is no sufficient argument against the danger of the influence alluded to, nor any palliation of the error of the proposed measure, (however well intended) that

both were rendered, in that instance, harmless, by a patriotic legislature, who declined acting on the proposition, on account of "the inconveniences anticipated from some parts of our constitution."

If legislators or other civil functionaries shall have committed any sins which they desire to *confess and make known* to an *omniscient GOD*—if they have any *secrets* to unfold to the Searcher of all hearts—if they have committed any trespasses they wish to be forgiven—if they would implore infinite benevolence to be kind to them—if they would move infinite love to pity them—if they have any *suggestions* to make to infinite wisdom—if they have any *services* to render or *aid* to offer to *Almighty power*—if they desire to arrest the judgment of immaculate justice—if they would assuage the *wrath of unbounded mercy*—if they expect by their supplications they can *stay or alter the eternal purposes* of an *unchangeable God*, and influence infinite benevolence, love, mercy, wisdom, justice, truth and power, to do that which would not be done without the intervention of *their communications* and *their prayers*—or if, when they pray, they are averse to "enter into their closets and shut the door," but prefer to "be as the hypocrites are, who love to pray standing in the synagogues," and other public places, "to be seen of men;" these are all matters of religious concern between their consciences and their God, with which no individual or the public has any business to meddle, when done in a manner not to interfere with the equal rights of others. But when the legislature, vested with power only to manage the concerns of civil government, shall exceed their constitutional authority, and lend their official influence to subserve "sectarian views of religious duty," and *hire* men to *pray* for them, and then take money from the public purse,* the joint property of

every citizen of every religious sect, to pay the daily wages of *official piety*, or for prayers in which other persons and other sects have no interest, and to which they cannot conscientiously respond assent, I trust the right of every citizen to demand the authority of such extraordinary proceedings, and to deny their constitutionality and their justice, will not be disputed. An investigation of this matter, which involves the religious liberties of your constituents, strictly accords with the objects for which your committee was instituted, and the importance of the subject renders it worthy of your most mature consideration.

Numerous meetings have been held in various parts of the state of New York as well as in other states, expressing in the most decided terms, their opposition to having the Mail stopped, and the Post Offices closed on Sunday. We regret our inability for want of room, to give even the names of places where many of these meetings have been held.

At a numerous and respectable meeting of the inhabitants of Pawling, Dutchess county, N. Y. we find the following, among other resolutions, unanimously adopted by the meeting.

"*Resolved*, That we view the attempts of the clergy, and a certain party in this country, to stop the transportation of the Mail on Sunday, as having resulted more from political than from moral and religious purposes; inasmuch as the law compels no man to carry the Mail or accept the office of Post Master, and therefore cannot materially interfere with the consciences of any.

"*Resolved*, That the conduct of some of the clergy of the present day, in their zealous promotion of Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, Sunday School Unions, and Seminaries for the manufacturing of Priests, for the support of which large sums of money are annually drawn from the people, are in our opinion in direct contrariety with the example of our Saviour, whom they adopt as their

* See a communication on this subject in our December number, page 189.

pattern, and by whose precepts they affect to be governed.

"Resolved, That clerical influence mingled with civil government has ever been the bane of its inhabitants, and history affords a sad memento of the persecutions and horrible massacres occasioned thereby.

"Resolved, That we disapprove of our state legislature, in Senate and Assembly, appointing chaplains, and paying them out of the state treasury."

[From the *Richmond Visitor & Telegraph.*]

A WORTHY EXAMPLE.

We record with unmixed pleasure another example of reverence for the Sabbath, which illustrates the power of christian principle and consistency of christian character, worthy of the profession and privileges of one who bears the name of Christ. The following is the example of which we speak; it is an extract of a letter from the Rev. Henry M. Kerr, to the editor of this paper, dated August 30, 1829.

"Col. David Reinhardt has resigned the profitable office of Post Master, which he had held for a number of years in Lincolnton, from *conscientious* principles, having latterly obtained a hope of peace with God; choosing rather to obey God in keeping the Sabbath holy than make gain on that day by the laws of the land."

Remarks by the Editor of the Reformer.

We had a pretty striking instance of this man's "christian principle and consistency of christian character," just before he resigned the office of Post Master, from such "*conscientious principles*" about keeping the Sabbath. He enclosed a number of the Reformer in a sheet of paper in the form of a letter, marked on it an ounce weight, franked 50 cents, as his franking privilege, and put a charge of 50 cents more on the letter, and then sent it to the Editor of this paper. After we had paid the 50 cents, suspecting what it proved to be, we took the letter inside of the Post Office before we broke the seal, and it was at once seen to be so palpably unprincipled and dishonest, that the 50 cents was promptly returned. If all who are so zeal-

ous about stopping the Mail on Sunday, and keeping it holy, should be such christians as this "*worthy example*," we may well pray to be delivered from them. We never knew an instance of a man who made a great display of zeal about keeping the Sabbath, that ever had any true religion; and too often the person does not possess common honesty, as in the case of this Ex-Post Master. It is in the very constitution of human nature, and consequently an invariable rule, that when a person lays great stress upon little things he neglects the more weighty matters.

It is stated in the National Intelligencer "that the stream of petitions against the transportation of the Mail on the Sabbath is on the flow, and may be expected to swell to a prodigious volume before the session is half gone through."

Carbonari—Intelligence from Rome, dated Oct. 22, states:—"The Special Commission appointed by the Pope to try the members of a society of Carbonari, arrested in the spring, who were 26 in number, after the most mature investigation and hearing of counsel, passed sentence last month. Don Joseph Picilli, as being an old sectarian, and Grand Master of a new Lodge of Carbonari, founded in Rome in 1828, was sentenced to death—one is sentenced to imprisonment in a fort for life—13 others for various periods, from 5 to 20 years—10 were dismissed on engaging to appear again if called upon—and one foreigner was ordered to leave the Papal dominions."

We regret our inability to insert in this number, the proceedings of various meetings in opposition to stopping the Mails and closing the Post Offices on Sunday—particularly one held at Poughkeepsie, and at Reading, N. Y.; at Strasburgh, Pa.; at Cincinnati, Ohio, and more especially a *Memorial to Congress* from Versailles, Kentucky—Also, an account of the last meeting held at Tammany Hall, N. York, and the one held at the Commissioners' Hall in the Northern Liberties of this city, January 25. We shall yet endeavour to give them in our columns or procure their insertion in other papers.

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